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PP RUEAIIB
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 PP RUEHC
 DE RUEHMH #6546/O1 3661432
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 P 311429Z DEC 84
 FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6327
 INFO RUTABA/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 6299
 RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 6593
 RUTAND/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA 0198
 RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 6595
 RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 2511
 RUFHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1649
 RUCJACC/USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
 RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0469
 BT
 C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 16546

AFDROUGHT DISTRIBUTION
 ROME FOR FODAG
 BRUSSELS FOR USEC

E.O. 12356: DECL: 12/31/99
 TAGS: SREF, PINS, EAID, SU, ET, PBTS, UNHCR, ICRC, WFP
 SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES IN EASTERN SUDAN: AN
 IMPENDING DISASTER?

REF: (A) KHARTOUM 16329 (B) KHARTOUM 16415
 (C) KHARTOUM 16472 (D) KHARTOUM 16542 (ALL NOTAL)

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. THIS IS THE LAST IN A SERIES OF REPORTS BY DCM ON
 ETHIOPIAN REFUGEE SITUATION IN EASTERN SUDAN BASED ON A
 VISIT TO THE KASSALA AREA DECEMBER 23-25 WITH ~~ADOL~~
~~KENNEDY~~

3. THE SITUATION IN EASTERN SUDAN FOR BOTH REFUGEES AND
 SUDANESE IS NOT GOOD. IF, AS PREDICTED, AN ADDITIONAL
 200,000 OR SO REFUGEES ARRIVE IN EASTERN SUDAN BETWEEN
 NOW AND THE END OF MARCH, THE SITUATION WILL BECOME MUCH
 WORSE. BOTH ETHIOPIA AND SUDAN ARE EXPERIENCING A
 SERIOUS DROUGHT. FOOD IS DESPERATELY SHORT IN THE EASTERN
 REGION OVER THE SHORT TERM. EMERGENCY FOOD AID ARRIVING
 FROM OUTSIDE SUDAN SHOULD AMELIORATE THE PROBLEM OVER THE
 MEDIUM AND LONG TERMS SO LONG AS NEW REFUGEE ARRIVALS
 DO NOT OVERWHELM THE INCOMING FOOD SUPPLY. THE SITUATION
 CONCERNING AVAILABILITY OF WATER IS EQUALLY GRAVE. AT
 THE AD HOC TEKL EL BAAB RECEPTION CENTER, FOR EXAMPLE,
 THERE IS NO REPEAT NO WATER EXCEPT THAT WHICH IS BROUGHT
 IN BY TANKER TRUCK. EVEN SOME OF THE ESTABLISHED
 SETTLEMENTS ARE EXPERIENCING SERIOUS WATER SHORTAGES.
 WELL-DRILLING RIGS ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY; THE FEW

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AVAILABLE RIGS FREQUENTLY BREAK DOWN FOR LACK OF SPARE PARTS. IN ADDITION, THE WATER TABLE IS FALLING. NOR ARE THERE ANY PROSPECTS THAT THE WATER SITUATION WILL IMPROVE IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.

ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE WATER TABLE IS ABOUT 16 METERS IN THE KASSALA/GEDAREF AREA. SOIL CONDITIONS PERMITTING, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO DIG WELLS BY HAND. SOIL CONDITIONS IN THE KASSALA AREA PROBABLY PERMIT HAND-DUG WELLS, ALTHOUGH THIS MAY NOT BE THE CASE IN THE GEDAREF AREA. TESTS ARE JUST NOW BEGINNING. FOOD AND WATER ARE THE TWO MOST IMMEDIATE CONCERNS IN THE EASTERN SUDAN REFUGEE CAMPS.

4. FOLLOWING THE RECENT ARRIVAL FROM THE US AND EUROPE OF NON-FOOD ITEMS, E.G., BLANKETS, TENTS, WATER CONTAINERS, MEASLES VACCINE, ETC., THIS IS NO LONGER THE CRITICAL ISSUE THAT IT WAS SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. THE PROBLEM, HOWEVER, CONCERNS DISTRIBUTION OF THIS MATERIAL. A LOCAL NATIONAL EMPLOYEE OF THE EMBASSY REFUGEE AFFAIRS OFFICE RETURNED DECEMBER 31 FROM THE KASSALA/GEDAREF AREA. HE DESCRIBED THE SITUATION AS "BEDLAM." MATERIAL IS BEING OFFLOADED FROM PLANES AND STORED WHEREVER SPACE CAN BE FOUND. FREQUENTLY, NO ONE KNOWS WHAT IS INSIDE THE CONTAINERS. SOME OF THE PLANES ARE ARRIVING IN KASSALA WITHOUT MANIFESTS. THE SUPPLIES BEING TRANSHIPPED BY TRUCK FROM KHARTOUM TO KASSALA ARE CREATING EVEN GREATER CONFUSION AS THEY REPORTEDLY COME IN UNMARKED CONTAINERS. WE CANNOT EMPHASIZE TOO STRONGLY THE NEED TO LABEL CONTAINERS AND FOR PLANE CAPTAINS TO HAND CARRY A MANIFEST OF ALL INCOMING CARGO. (RECENT US MILITARY FLIGHTS REPORTEDLY HAVE RESOLVED THIS ISSUE; UNHCR AND COMMERCIAL SHIPMENTS MAY STILL BE THE CULPRITS.) THE PRINCIPAL BOTTLENECK CONCERNS THE INABILITY OF THE MINUSCULE STAFF IN KASSALA OF THE COMMISSIONER OF REFUGEES OFFICE TO OFFLOAD, STORE AND DISTRIBUTE THE INCOMING MATERIAL. THE COR REPRESENTATIVE IS OVERWHELMED BY THE TASK. IN THE COMING WEEKS CARE WILL ASSIST WITH THE LOGISTICAL EFFORT IN THE EASTERN REGION, BUT THAT DOES NOT RESOLVE THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM.

5. ONE KNOWLEDGEABLE EXPATRIATE OBSERVER WHO IS WORKING IN THE EASTERN REGION COMMENTED TO DCM DECEMBER 24 THAT THE REFUGEE SITUATION HAS ALL THE INGREDIENTS OF AN IMPENDING DISASTER. HE COMMENTED THAT THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS CANNOT BE AVERTED UNLESS SIGNIFICANT QUANTITIES OF FOOD ARRIVE IN THE COMING WEEKS AND ARRANGEMENTS
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 KHARTOUM 16546

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TAGS: SREF, PINS, EAID, SU, ET, PBTS, UNHCR, ICRC, WFP
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES IN EASTERN SUDAN: AN

ARE MADE TO PROVIDE MORE WATER AT THE SETTLEMENT SITES.

6. EVEN THOUGH ALL OF THE PARTIES CONCERNED WITH THE REFUGEE ISSUE ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH HANDLING IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS, ONE INDIVIDUAL WHO IS DEEPLY INVOLVED WITH THE QUESTION, WHEN ASKED HOW THE SITUATION MANAGED TO DETERIORATE TO SUCH AN EXTENT, PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING RESPONSE. (A) HE SAID THAT UNHCR DID NOT YELL LOUD ENOUGH, SOON ENOUGH, (B) WFP DID NOT PLAN AHEAD AND HAS NOT SHOWN ITSELF CAPABLE OF DEALING QUICKLY AND APPROPRIATELY WITH THE FOOD PROBLEM. (C) THE SUDANESE OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES IS, LIKE SO MANY

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SUDANESE BUREAUCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, NOT SUFFICIENTLY
EFFICIENT TO DEAL WITH A PROBLEM OF THIS MAGNITUDE.
DCM WOULD OFFER A 4TH REASON. NO ONE COULD REALLY
FORESEE WITH ANY DEGREE OF PRECISION THE NUMBER OF
ETHIOPIANS WHO WOULD ARRIVE IN EASTERN SUDAN. PERSONS
WORKING ON REFUGEE AFFAIRS KNEW THERE WOULD BE A MAJOR
PROBLEM. PERHAPS WISHFUL THINKING PREVENTED THEM FROM
REALIZING IT WOULD BECOME AS SEVERE AS HAS OCCURRED.
HORAN

END OF MESSAGE

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